

Message Text

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ORIGIN SS-25

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S/S- MR. GAMMON

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY TAIPEI IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

AMEMBASSY VIENTIANE

AMEMBASSY PHNOM PENH

AMEMBASSY SAIGON

INFO AMEMBASSY TOKYO PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY MANILA

USLO PEKING

AMCONSUL HONG KONG

CINCPAC HONOLULU HI PRIORITY

S E C R E T STATE 169575

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MILI, TW, TH, JA, CB, LA, VS

SUBJECT: WITHDRAWAL OF C130'S FROM TAIWAN

REF: (A) STATE 154313 (B) TAIPEI 4802

YOU SHOULD RESPOND ALONG THE FOLLOWING LINES TO THE THREE
QUESTIONS RAISED BY PREMIER CHIANG CHING-KUO (REF B) --
WHETHER OUR C-130 REDEPLOYMENT IS IN RESPONSE TO THE
SHANGHAI COMMUNIQUE; WHERE THE AIRCRAFT ARE TO BE REDE-
PLOYED; WHETHER WE COULD ISSUE A PUBLIC ANNOUNCEMENT OF
THE MOVE AFTER AUGUST 15.

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1. OUR DECISION TO BASE THE C-130 SQUADRONS ON TAIWAN IN

THE MID-1960'S WAS A RESULT OF THE RAPIDLY INCREASING REQUIREMENT FOR MILITARY AIRLIFT CAPACITY WHICH GREW OUT OF HOSTILITIES IN SOUTHEAST ASIA. TAIWAN WAS SELECTED BECAUSE OF BASE OVERCROWDING IN OTHER AREAS SUCH AS THE PHILIPPINES, THAILAND, AND OKINAWA. THE REDUCTION OF TENSIONS IN SOUTHEAST ASIA ATTENDANT TO THE VIETNAM SETTLEMENT HAS BOTH PERMITTED THE RETURN OF PART OF THIS AIRLIFT CAPACITY TO THE U.S. AND THE TRANSFER OF THE REMAINDER TO PREVIOUSLY OVERCROWDED BASES, LOCATIONS WHICH WILL PERMIT THEM TO CARRY OUT THEIR MISSIONS WITH GREATEST EFFICIENCY.

THIS REDEPLOYMENT IS RELATED, AS WELL, TO THE SHANGHAI COMMUNIQUE, BUT ONLY IN THE SENSE THAT THE COMMUNIQUE CONTEMPLATED THE REDUCTION OF U.S. FORCES ON TAIWAN AS THE TENSIONS IN THE AREA DIMINISH.

2. AS TO THE DESTINATION OF THE TAW SQUADRONS ONCE THEY LEAVE TAIWAN, IT HAS BEEN DECIDED (REF A) THAT THOSE PLANES AND PERSONNEL STILL ON TAIWAN ASSOCIATED WITH THE FIRST SQUADRON BE REDEPLOYED TO THE UNITED STATES BY AUGUST 15; THE REMAINDER OF THAT SQUADRON WILL REMAIN IN THAILAND FOR THE TIME BEING. WE APPRECIATE THE PREMIER'S CONCERN ABOUT THE RELOCATION OF THE REMAINING SQUADRONS IN THE WING BUT, WHILE NO FINAL DECISIONS HAVE YET BEEN TAKEN, IT APPEARS ALMOST CERTAIN THAT THOSE UNITS WILL BE REDEPLOYED TO OTHER LOCATIONS IN THE WESTERN PACIFIC AREA IN ORDER TO MAINTAIN AS ESSENTIAL MILITARY AIRLIFT CAPABILITY IN THE REGION.

3. WE ARE WILLING TO MAKE A PUBLIC ANNOUNCEMENT ALONG THE LINES SUGGESTED BY CCK, AND PLAN TO DO SO ON SEPTEMBER 4 IN ORDER TO AVOID ANY MISLEADING LINKAGE WITH THE AUGUST 15 BOMBING HALT. THE ANNOUNCEMENT WILL REFER ONLY TO THE REDEPLOYMENT LOCATION OF THE FIRST SQUADRON, SINCE WE DO NOT NORMALLY ANNOUNCE IN ADVANCE MOVES OF U.S. MILITARY UNITS. (FYI: THIS SHOULD ACCOMMODATE CCK BY KEEPING THE PUBLIC FOCUS ON THAT PART OF THE TRANSFER WHICH IS

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RETURNING AIRCRAFT TO THE U.S. RATHER THAN THE OTHER PORTION WHICH IS REDEPLOYING THE REMAINDER OF THE C-130'S ELSEWHERE IN THE REGION. ALSO, BECAUSE ANNOUNCEMENT OF THE REDEPLOYMENT OF THE BULK OF THE FIRST SQUADRON TO THE U.S. MAY CAUSE ANXIETIES IN BANGKOK, SAIGON, PHNOM PENH, AND VIENTIANE, WE PLAN TO REASSURE THOSE GOVERNMENTS OF OUR INTENTION TO RETAIN ADEQUATE AIRLIFT CAPACITY IN THE REGION. LASTLY, WE SHOULD HAVE NO DIFFICULTY IN ALLOWING

A REASONABLE TIME LAPSE BETWEEN THE ANNOUNCEMENT AND THE MOVE OF THE REMAINING UNITS, AS RECOMMENDED REF B. END FYI.)

4. TEXT OF THE ANNOUNCEMENT, WHICH IN LINE WITH NORMAL PRACTICE SHOULD BE RELEASED BY CINCPAC, IS AS FOLLOWS:
QUOTE THE 374TH TACTICAL AIRLIFT WING, EQUIPPED WITH C-130 TRANSPORT AIRCRAFT AND NOW BASED AT CCK AIR BASE IN TAIWAN, IS BEING RELOCATED IN A MOVE THAT WILL BE COMPLETED OVER THE NEXT SEVERAL MONTHS. THE FIRST SQUADRON

RELOCATED TO LITTLE ROCK AFB, ARKANSAS IN MID-AUGUST. THESE AIRCRAFT ORIGINALLY WERE TRANSFERRED TO CCK AIR BASE TO ASSIST IN LOGISTICAL MILITARY OPERATIONS IN THE WESTERN PACIFIC AND SOUTHEAST ASIA. THE CONTINUED NEED FOR THOSE AIRCRAFT ON TAIWAN HAS DECREASED WITH THE REDUCTION OF U.S. INVOLVEMENT IN HOSTILITIES IN SOUTHEAST ASIA AND WITH THE LESSENING OF TENSIONS IN THE AREA. UNQUOTE.

5. FOR BANGKOK, SAIGON, PHNOM PENH, AND VIENTIANE: YOU SHOULD INFORM HOST GOVERNMENTS AT THE APPROPRIATE LEVEL THAT THIS REDEPLOYMENT WILL NOT IMPAIR U.S. MILITARY AIRLIFT CAPABILITY IN SOUTHEAST ASIA OR THE REGION GENERALLY -- THREE OF THE FOUR SQUADRONS WILL BE REDEPLOYED TO OTHER LOCATIONS IN THE PACIFIC. RUSH

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